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ABSTRACT

Developed in response to requests from public school providers to the Massachusetts Department of Education for technical assistance, this publication offers guidance on how best to care for and educate young children whose first language is other than English and/or who are from diverse cultural backgrounds. The question and answer format addresses issues on the following subjects: language and culture, screening and outreach, curriculum and physical environment, classroom language instructional models, working with families, administrative and staff considerations, and answers to some myths about cultural groups and language learning. A resource section describes a variety of organizations and sources of information, assistance, and materials relevant to culturally and linguistically diverse programs. Books and print materials are highlighted in various sections of the text. Descriptions of developmentally appropriate materials, supplies, and equipment are provided in an appendix. Contains 58 references. (LB)

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YOUNG LIVES:
MANY LANGUAGES, MANY CULTURES

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YOUNG LIVES:
MANY LANGUAGES,
MANY CULTURES

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and
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An early childhood director in a school whose early childhood programs integrate children with diverse needs and abilities, including children whose first language is Cape Verdean, reports:

> *. . . This year we also have Latvian triplets whose parents are recent immigrants. Two children have recently come to us from an orphanage in Rumania. They have just arrived in the United States, having been adopted by a single woman in the town. They speak no English and their new mother speaks no Rumanian. This is so confusing, I just don't know how to think about all the language and cultural issues involved and how to do the best thing for each child.*

Similar stories can be heard around the United States and around Massachusetts, as more children from more diverse cultures are entering organized programs for early care and education.

The North American continent was already rich in cultures and languages upon arrival of Europeans from many different countries looking for wealth or a new life on this continent. Over the intervening centuries, diversification of the population continued through annexation and acquisition of land from indigenous tribes and other nations, the forced migration of African peoples and through continued immigration from Europe as well as from China and Japan. In a survey conducted in 37 cities in 1908, nearly 60 percent of the children in school had parents born outside the United States, originating in over 60 different countries (Olsen, 1990). There are 8.5 million immigrants expected to enter the United States in the 1990s, a number approaching the number of Europeans who arrived in the decade of peak immigration (1900-1910). These new immigrants will come primarily from Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean islands, although immigration from Eastern Europe and the countries once part of the Soviet Union is also increasing. From these facts alone, it is clear that the contact of many languages and cultures in the United States has been the norm in the past and will continue to be in the future.

What is different today is the trend toward earlier care and education of children outside the home and the increasing awareness of the value of high quality early childhood education in contributing to children's success in school and in their adult lives. Because early care and education outside the home have grown in their presence and importance in young children's lives, staff in early childhood programs must take stock of their own role in each child's language development, whether that language is English or not.

The basic premises that focus the discussion of various aspects of supporting young children's development in early childhood programs are the following:

- Children in their early years are in the process of primary language acquisition.
- Language and communication are essential building blocks of learning and are fundamental to the cognitive, social and emotional development of young children and to their later academic and life success.
- Language is closely linked with culture. Culture is embedded in all social interactions and provides the context in which children develop.
- Young children are in the process of formulating their sense of self or identity.

Given a rich language environment, almost all children will progress in their language development. A primary goal for educators of young children is to provide the kind of language experiences that support and enhance the language environment of the home. Attaining this goal may entail supporting a child in continuing to learn a language other than English and postponing formal exposure to English; it may entail supporting the development of two languages. Because of the importance of language learning to cognitive development, promoting general language development should be the primary consideration for program planning rather than the learning of English. The early childhood years are fertile ones for language acquisition and they also seem to be a time when a language can be easily forgotten.

Although learning English is essential to children's eventual academic success in this country, learning language and becoming literate is a long and complex process and should not be rushed. There is no one right answer to the question of how to best support each child's language development in the classroom. Many factors must be considered in deciding how to best cultivate a child's language development, factors which extend beyond the classroom or the individual child.

As the population in early childhood programs becomes more diverse and as educators seek to give all young children the best start in life, there is a growing need for strategies and resources that enhance the early learning experiences for children of many languages and many cultures. This is the task that we hope to begin here.

This paper has been written for teachers and administrators of early childhood programs, particularly preschool and kindergarten programs. Although it is written with public school programs in mind, the issues and questions raised about how to educate and care most effectively for young children whose first language is other than English and/or who are from various cultural backgrounds are applicable to other early childhood settings.

Much of the information provided here can be of use to all programs, not only those with children who speak a language other than English, although that is the primary focus of this paper. This information can also help programs become more inclusive of children who speak English but who are not from the dominant culture of the United States or of their own community, and programs that are not culturally diverse but want to help children respect human diversity. Learning early to thrive in and enjoy a diverse world is a benefit for children of all cultures and languages.

Young Lives is organized into three parts. Part I provides the theoretical background -- a summary of the nature of language and its relationship to culture, second language acquisition and bilingualism. This section elaborates on the premises stated above. Part II addresses specific applications of this information to various aspects of early childhood program operation -- screening and outreach, curriculum, classroom models, working with families and administrative issues. Part III contains a resource section, listing a variety of organizations to contact for information, training, technical assistance and products; and a bibliography of books and articles that have been used in preparation of this paper.

The format of this paper is question and answer. Some of the questions are general and simply focus the topic, others are questions that are commonly asked about programs for children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. The answers are designed to stimulate thinking about various aspects of early childhood programs that are culturally and linguistically sensitive and to provide some direction for answering the questions that are raised as a result.

PART I: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The ability to acquire and make use of language is a characteristic of being human. Theorizing about how language is learned, how different languages developed, and what functions language serves in human psychology and society is of ancient origin and continues to be of interest to people today. Several theories exist explaining how young children learn any of the nearly 4000 languages currently in use around the world.

The development of language begins before birth, as the awareness of sound emerges in the fetus. Babies start experimenting with sounds through babbling very soon after birth, but language learning becomes more recognizable as such at around the age of one year, when infants begin to produce meaningful sounds that approximate words. By the time a child reaches the age of six, a basic model of adult language has been acquired. From six through adulthood this language will be elaborated and refined -- articulation of speech sounds will improve, vocabulary will expand, meanings of words will accumulate, and skills in the many aspects of communication will grow -- but most six year olds possess a working knowledge of at least one language, including a competency in grammar that nearly matches that of an adult. Young children understand more language than they are able to use; their comprehension generally precedes and exceeds their ability to express themselves in language.

Language and cognitive development are intimately intertwined. During the process of language acquisition, words and their meanings come to represent things and ideas. Language is powerful to the young child because it vastly improves communication and increases the complexity and potential of play, and also enables language-based thought, or private speech, to develop.

Research emerging from several fields, particularly linguistics and developmental psychology, has been helpful in outlining the general trends and complexities of early development in the first language. Models of language acquisition differ according to what degree and what specific aspects of language are proposed to be innate, and about how and to what degree the linguistic and cultural environment influence language development.

No one theory has yet been able to offer a complete picture of the many facets of language learning and behavior. The complex and abstract nature of the research in first and second language acquisition, and bilingualism, makes it difficult to say with certainty that there is one best strategy for supporting the language development of all young children in the process of becoming bilingual. Regardless of the theory favored, most researchers agree that the observable ways in which all young children learn language are through exposure to language, interaction with other people, and through play with language and using language to accompany play.

What is the relationship of language to culture?

Language is defined by culture and at the same time defines culture. People identify strongly with their language as a sign and symbol of their cultural and personal identities. The concepts of the world shared by the people of any culture are expressed through their language. The way that peoples of various cultures see the world differs because each cultural group has shared environments and histories that are unique. These experiences influence their language and help account for the evolution of languages over time. In turn, the concepts embedded in language, as expressed through words and grammar, influence the way children learning language see and experience the world and so, through language, culture is transmitted to the next generation.

The general functions of language remain the same across cultures: the communication of information, the building and maintenance of social relationships, and the development of the self through the internal representation of thoughts and ideas and through identification with the culture of the family. Within that framework, the meanings and expressiveness that develop within each person as a result of the interaction of culture, gender, family environment, education and experience make each person's language unique.

The word language itself is global, and so are the labels for different languages, such as "English" or "Spanish." On the one hand, there are not clear linguistic distinctions between many languages that are commonly considered separate, Norwegian and Swedish, for example. On the other hand, variations among versions or dialects of one language may be so great as to make it questionable whether those different versions are the same language. Some version of English is spoken in many parts of the world, but the language has evolved in unique ways to express individual cultures and histories. It is as much history and politics, which are components of the culture of a people, as its linguistic properties that determine what is considered a language.

There are a number of specific effects that culture has on language and nonverbal communication. Even within the United States among speakers of English, there are differences in pacing and turn-taking among different regions, ethnic groups and genders. Similar variations occur within other languages. Lack of awareness of these different customs can lead to breakdowns in communication and is one source of stereotypes and prejudices. For example, people in Northern cities, such as New York and Boston, typically talk faster than people from the rural South. Ignorance of this basic fact of regional dialects can lead Northerners to think Southerners are slow and Southerners to think that Northerners are rude, opinions which may be based solely on language patterns.

Culture influences child rearing practices and the way that parents and other adults interact with children in spoken and nonverbal language. Cultural differences in child rearing are sometimes viewed as strange or "unnatural" to those outside the culture, but the differences usually make sense within the context of the environment in which they evolved.

There are several components of language that interact when people speak, listen, read or write: language codes, nonverbal communication, cultural communicative styles and individual differences.

- Language codes: A language is a code that people know in varying degrees and have varying amounts of skill in understanding and using. Regional dialects, class dialects, formal and informal language, ceremonial language, gender-specific language are all codes within the more general code of a particular language.

A different language is the easiest kind of code to identify because it sounds different or incomprehensible to the listener. Dialects within a language are often assumed to be identical in meaning to the standard version of the language but with a different accent. Important differences in meaning may go unnoticed when people recognize that they are speaking the same language and assume that they understand each other, when in fact they do not.

American Sign Language (ASL) and sign languages in other parts of the world are visual languages comparable to any verbal language. ASL is used daily by more than 500,000 people and is the third most widely-used language in the U.S. Sign languages are considered to be the natural language of the deaf as oral/aural languages are the natural languages of people who hear. Because it is a natural language, its development follows the same general pattern as spoken languages.

- Nonverbal communication is also a form of language that inevitably accompanies verbal (or visual) language. Nonverbal communication is culturally defined and usually understood automatically by others who share the culture. Examples of nonverbal communication are hand gestures, the amount of space people put between themselves in a conversation and when and how much eye contact there is during an interaction.

Customary nonverbal gestures, facial expressions and other body language differ among cultures. The differences in the meaning ascribed to nonverbal cues may conflict and lead to persistent misunderstanding and misinterpretation (Hall, 1966). A conflict based on differences in nonverbal communication can occur between people of different cultures who speak different languages, English and Arabic for example, or between people who speak the same language but belong to different cultures within the same country, African-Americans and Americans of European descent, for example. Some cultures rely more on nonverbal cues to provide meaning to interactions than other cultures, which rely more heavily on verbal interaction.

- Cultural communicative style refers to customs and norms concerning the use of language and communication. For instance, how and when children are expected to communicate with adults in one culture may not be consistent with what is expected of children in another culture.

Reticence with adults is sometimes seen in children of Native American heritage among others, and this communicative style may come into conflict with expectations of adults who are not familiar with that culture. For example, teachers have had difficulty getting children from some tribes to answer questions or to talk directly to them because direct discourse with respected adults outside the family is not considered polite. Inquiry into the communicative style of a culture can provide valuable information about how to communicate effectively and how to nurture the language development of children from that culture.

- Individual differences: Language and culture are filtered through the individual, who is unique in personal history, cognitive style, and experience.

The pace and strategies of language learning and the style of expression will be different for each child. Even children close in age and brought up in the same family often vary considerably in their language development, particularly in the early years of life.

What is bilingualism?

In many places in the world, extending back millennia, people who speak different languages and/or different dialects have found ways to communicate and coexist. Being bilingual or bidialectical has been common throughout history and is still common throughout the world today. About one half of the people alive today know at least two languages (Romaine, 1989). Bilingualism is not a term that is easily defined or widely agreed upon, and it is difficult to measure. Bilingualism exists both at a community level and at the personal level.

There is an ecology of languages at the community or regional level which depends on the numbers of speakers of various languages, attitudes toward those languages, the functions that each language serves in a community, and on government policy. Individuals need to communicate in different contexts (home, school, business, religious rituals) that may require different languages. In this way, bilingualism is expedient to getting along in the life of the community. Although a majority of the population of a region or community might be bilingual, whole countries of people are not functionally bilingual across all contexts. If this situation were to develop, one of the languages would be redundant and one would come to predominate. When viewed over time, the language environment of an area is fluid. Languages themselves are fluid and change in contact with each other (the minority or lower status language changing more and contributing less to the majority language). Languages and language communities are in flux, although changes may seem slow or nonexistent over the course of the lifetime of an individual.

Bilingualism in individuals implies some degree of knowledge of two or more languages. Reliable information about proficiency or even about numbers of people who speak a language is not easily gathered because of differing conceptions about language. People in various cultures have different ideas about who speaks their language, or about who is competent in their language. Some people believe that if they are not literate then they do not know the language and may report not knowing it even if they speak it all the time. Most people can identify their first or home language, but the first language is not always the best known. An adult may be more knowledgeable about the language used in school, while maintaining an emotional attachment (implied in the term "mother tongue") with the first language or even a language learned later, but with which s/he identifies culturally.

How do children learn a second language? Is there an ideal way to become bilingual?

There are several ways that children become bilingual in early childhood. These ways vary primarily according to whether both parents and/or other adults in the household speak the same native language, which language (if either) is dominant in the community, and what strategy is used in conversing with the child -- which language(s) each parent uses with the child, with other family members and in the community (Romaine, 1989). Researchers differ on whether a child who has learned two or more languages from birth processes language in the same way as a child who learns a second language after a first language, say, starting at age three or five.

Traditionally, it has been thought that the ideal way for a child to become bilingual is for one parent always to speak one language to the child, for the other parent always to speak the second language to the child, and for neither parent to mix languages. That may be ideal, but children can and do learn two languages when both parents speak two languages interchangeably. Although this situation makes it more likely that the child will still be mixing the two languages in the preschool years, it does not necessarily signify a long-term problem. If the parents are accustomed to mixing language, it is unlikely they will change this habit because it is usually unconscious. Mixing languages is also a regular feature of some bilingual communities. Young children may also learn a language other than their home language from neighborhood playmates, in a family day care situation or in an early childhood program. This second language may be primarily associated with the environment in which it is learned and may not generalize to other circumstances. Children have a remarkable ability to sort out where and to whom to speak a language.

How much and how well a child learns a language will depend on who speaks what language and the child's relationship with the speaker. The importance of the relationship will influence motivation to learn the language of the speaker. It makes a difference where and how much of each language is heard by a child. The environment also influences how a child perceives the status of each language and the perceived status will influence the learning of each language.

McLaughlin (1984) concludes that the process of learning a second language at any age is generally similar in quality to learning the first language in that it involves the use of similar cognitive strategies. These strategies include:

- distinguishing sounds and learning phonological rules,
- constructing meanings and expressing these through grammatical statements, and
- gradually bringing word meanings into agreement with the concepts of adult speakers.

Other general strategies in learning second language include:

- applying simple rules before complex ones.
- relying on word order as a clue to word meaning;
- using known words as a clue to the meaning of the whole statement;
- simplifying when possible;
- fitting new information into what is already known;
- using formulaic expressions or phrases until more precise linguistic knowledge is mastered; and
- gradually adjusting word meanings to agree with those of a native speaker.

Usually children learn features of a second language in about the same order as monolingual speakers of that language. A child who is trying to learn a second language or dialect can be helped or impeded by the characteristics of the language already known, but this interference is normally temporary. That is, the ways in which languages are the same or different can enhance or temporarily interfere with the order and ease with which features of the second language are learned.

Strategies for learning a second language will reflect the learning style of the individual child. A child who is reserved and tends to watch and wait before acting or talking in the first language is unlikely to behave impulsively in learning a second language.

Romaine (1989) describes some differences in the language development of a bilingual child in contrast to a monolingual child. Because of limited cognitive capacity in early childhood, a child learning two languages may split his or her capacity for word learning between the two languages and not store word equivalents in both languages. This means that the child will not have the same vocabulary in both languages or know double the number of words of a monolingual child. The young bilingual child will know about the same number of words or meanings as the monolingual child, but the vocabulary will be split between the two languages, and the knowledge of one language will not be a mirror image of the other. However, this situation usually does not impede communication. Although bilingual children may know fewer words in a language than children who are monolingual in that language, verbal fluency in terms of storytelling ability and conceptual richness has been found to be superior in bilingual children. Young bilingual children also develop an earlier awareness of the arbitrariness of language labels than monolingual children, increasing cognitive flexibility. These observations are, of course, general and should not be assumed to be true of any given child.

When is the best time for children to learn a second language?

The early childhood years are the primary time of language acquisition, and children learn a tremendous amount about language and communication in the first years of their lives. Learning language is one of the primary tasks of early childhood and children spend much of their time doing it. Young children may delight or amaze us with the speed of their acquisition of language, but the ease of it is more apparent than real. Assuming that a young child is exposed to language for at least five hours a day between the ages of one and six, s/he will get about 9000 hours of language "instruction" to achieve the proficiency that is attained by the time of entry into first grade (McLaughlin, 1984).

Certain aspects of second language acquisition are easier for the young child than for an older child or adult. Native-like pronunciation (phonology) of a second language is easiest for the young child. Young children are not as self-conscious as older children and adults and so have an easier time making mistakes and picking up mannerisms typical of the native speaker (nonverbal communication).

Other aspects of language learning, such as conceptual development and literacy, are more easily accomplished by older learners. Research indicates that older children and adolescents acquire a second language more efficiently than young children, having superior memory, greater ability to apply the linguistic knowledge they already possess and more ability to profit from instruction.

Strictly from a linguistic point of view, early childhood is an excellent time to learn two languages. The potentially negative effects of a young child learning a second language, such as stagnation in the development or even loss of the first language, are linked to socioeconomic, cultural and community factors: the educational level of the parents, the status of the language in the community, and the number and complexity of contacts with people in the community who speak the minority language.

As more children who speak a language other than English enter early childhood programs, the issue for early childhood professionals is if, when, and how much English should be introduced in the early years and how to best support bilingual language development. The decision about the introduction of English should not be based on the idea that the early childhood years are necessarily the ideal or easiest time to learn a second language and that the best time has been missed if English is introduced later. The decision needs to be based on each child's language acquisition, the language environment of the home and community and how learning a second language might affect the child's first language development and the family. It is the development of language that is of primary importance. Although the earliest years of life are good ones for acquiring more than one language, they are also an easy time to lose a language, particularly when the first language is not the dominant one in the community. Loss of language seems to be particularly easy in the early childhood years and this loss can undermine family communication and cognitive development (Wong Fillmore, 1991).

Understanding when, from whom and under what circumstances a child learns each language is important in figuring out how to best support an individual child's language development. For instance, a child whose parents are both bilingual and educated (say, in English and Spanish) and who has heard both languages from birth will have different needs than a child who enters a preschool program knowing only Spanish, whose parents are uneducated and have fled from political persecution. The language in this case may not be the key issue -- the surrounding circumstances are. A child whose parents have had a formal education in their own county may have an advantage in school in the United States because the parents may have experiences or values in common with the school that make the transition between the family and the culture of the school easier. In the second case, moving to a foreign country (the U.S. in this case) under traumatic circumstances is an upheaval that may have a powerful effect on the adults' abilities to provide the emotional nurturance and other resources that support their child's development in all areas. Circumstances that affect the family economically and emotionally will affect a child's needs and language development.

TO READ MORE . . .

Language Development: A Base for Educational Policy Planning, a Policy Issues Paper, by Nancy F. Conklin, Carole Hunt and Laura Walkrush for the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. A short (30 pages) summary of language and communication issues as they relate to education, including sections on bilingualism, literacy and early childhood considerations.

Understanding Bilingual/Bicultural Young Children, by Lourdes Diaz Soto. An article from Young Children magazine that provides a concise review of research on early childhood bilingualism and its implications.

Second Language Acquisition: Volume 1: The Preschool Years, by Barry McLaughlin. A comprehensive volume on becoming bilingual in the early childhood years, including a review of theories of first and second language acquisition and their implications for education and later language learning. "Preschool" in the title of this book refers to children between birth and school age (around 6).

Early Childhood Research Quarterly. The special issue of September of 1991 entitled, "Educating Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Preschoolers," edited by Lillian Katz and Daniel Walsh, is a collection of current research and thoughts by researchers and policy makers on various aspects of language learning in young children and the development of appropriate programs.

(see Bibliography for more complete information and additional resources.)

PART II: APPLICATIONS

SCREENING AND OUTREACH

The best point of departure for promoting positive attitudes toward diversity is to assemble a diverse group of children in the program. Children then can learn about differences in race, gender, culture and ability through direct experience with their peers. Outreach and screening should be used to identify a diverse group of children who will benefit from early education. If the goal is to start or continue a program for children who speak a language other than English and for those children to maintain their first language, outreach will be necessary to find children who speak the language of the classroom.

A child's early years are critical for learning and growth. Early childhood programs in public schools and Head Start conduct outreach programs to inform parents of screening programs to determine whether their child has special needs and to inform them of services available to preschool and kindergarten age children. Special efforts should be made to reach families of young children living in poverty, particularly children of linguistic and cultural minority groups, because a disproportionate number are poor. There is a well-documented link between poverty and disabling conditions, and between poverty and learning problems (Edmunds, Martinson and Goldberg, 1990). At the same time, simply being unable to speak English is not a disability. Children whose first language is other than English may be "at risk" of needing special education for the same reasons children whose families speak English may be at risk -- because of the effects of poverty, lack of early health care or intervention, or other environmental factors that adversely affects development. Children from homes where there is not a rich language environment are at risk of delays in language and cognitive development and may need additional support for language development. Children from homes where the first language is other than English may be put at risk by lack of proper support for bilingual language development. This situation indicates a need for proper language support and enrichment, not necessarily for special education services.

Federal law entitles all children with special needs to a free appropriate public education. State and federal laws support the education of all children and no particular group of children should be excluded from these services. Research demonstrates that young children's participation in quality early childhood programs decreases the need for further intervention as children grow older, is cost effective, increases the likelihood of high school graduation and reduces the need for future special education services (Cotton and Conklin, 1989).

What are some ways that parents from diverse linguistic and cultural groups can be reached?

The best way to reach parents is through oral and written communications in their native language. Contacting community, cultural or service organizations is a critical part of an outreach program. Specific examples of places to post materials or make contacts with members of different linguistic and cultural communities include ethnic grocery stores or restaurants, churches or synagogues, health care facilities, cable television, radio, and the public library. Methods such as using only print media or only recruiting children for the preschool program who have been enrolled in the local Early Intervention Program, are insufficient for reaching all of the families in the community whose children may need an early childhood program.

What are the legal requirements regarding screening and identification of special needs among children who speak a language other than English?

All children from the age of three are eligible for special education services through the public school system in Massachusetts. School committees must publicize the availability of screening and programs for young children in the languages spoken in the community. Parents who have concerns about their child's development may take advantage of free screening, which must be conducted in the native language of the child.

Screening is a brief procedure designed to identify children who may have learning problems that would prevent effective progress in a regular education program. Questions arising from the results of screening would result in a referral for a more comprehensive, intensive assessment. Screening includes gathering information from parents; physician screening; vision and hearing screening; visual, auditory and motor screening in practical tasks and activities; and a language function screening. Only standardized screening instruments which are both reliable and valid should be administered by certified or trained personnel. Refer to the Chapter 766 regulations for information relevant to special education for children whose first language is other than English and to clarify other screening procedures.

Is it acceptable to translate a screening instrument into another language?

No. Straight language translations of screening and assessment instruments often fail to consider cultural differences, language dialects and other variables. Under- or overidentifying children of one gender, race or ethnic group as having special needs may result from using invalid or unreliable screening instruments, including those that were not designed for the language or culture of the population being screened.

How can language impairment or delay be determined in a young child who is learning two languages?

The purpose of screening for special needs, particularly in the area of language, is to determine language competency, not English language skills or knowledge. There is a multifaceted procedure to determine whether speech or language concerns are related to special education needs, or are within the norm for children who speak another language or who are in the process of becoming bilingual. Observe the child talking to peers or family members and talk to caregivers about the child's communication and language skills. For a child in the process of second language acquisition, try to assess the level of development in each language, although accurate assessment of bilingual development is difficult, particularly in young children. Language assessment strategies might include:

- observation in a setting where the child is comfortable and that includes culturally relevant materials
- a home visit by a person who is sensitive and knowledgeable about cultural differences

- a developmental history including the age at which major developmental milestones were achieved
- audio or video excerpts of the child engaged in block building, dramatic play or other age-appropriate activities that are consistent with the child's culture
- a detailed report from caregivers about where and from whom the child hears different languages
- specific additional assessments, such as motor, cognitive, social and psychological functioning
- medical information including vision/hearing testing

The key is to assess the child's abilities to communicate and to identify communication problems that seem not to be related solely to second language acquisition.

What should I expect to see in a young child who is learning two languages?

There are several typical behaviors that you might observe:

- a silent period is common in young children when learning a second language.

Consider the whole child -- environment, family, culture, the child's learning style -- to ascertain if silence is simply a sign of learning and adjustment or if it signals a problem. Most likely, the child is learning the language and will start to speak when s/he feels comfortable. Many older children and adults learning a second language are also silent until they feel they have enough knowledge of the language to speak or unless they are pressured to perform. A young child should not be pressured to speak.

- mixing languages or "code-switching" is common. Part of a sentence may be put in one language, the rest in the second language; a word from one language may be inserted into a sentence of the other language.

This is not usually a problem. Given models of correct speech in both languages and opportunities to interact in both languages, the child will sort them out. It is worthwhile to inquire about whom in the child's life is speaking which language and if mixing languages is common at home. The term code switching also is used to refer to switching between two languages or dialects as appropriate to circumstances. The facility to adapt one's language to that of one's partner in communication is a normal characteristic of bilingualism and develops quite early in children who are exposed to two languages from birth (typically between age two and four):

- routines or formulaic expressions may be used. A child just learning English may use such phrases as "I wanna ..." or "Where is it ..." as a base for a variety of requests or questions, not all of which are grammatically correct.

Children will use such phrases when they have a general idea about their meaning and when to use them but do not yet have the knowledge or experience to analyze the component words and use those words alone correctly. Eventually they will acquire this knowledge with more language experience with peers and adults who are proficient in the second language. Children learning their first language also use this strategy, although it is more frequently seen prior to preschool age in first language acquisition. This strategy is also popular with adults learning a second language.

- mistakes in the second language (English, for example) are common. Often these errors will be similar to those made by monolingual children at the same age or somewhat earlier. An example would be using the word "foot" or "foots" instead of "feet," or misapplying rules governing plurals, verb tense or auxiliary verbs.

Some errors can be traced to interference between the grammar, phonology, or semantics of the two languages. In any case, modeling correct language through an expansion or clarification of the child's statement rather than by correcting the child's speech is the best approach.

TO READ MORE . . .

Demographics and Cultural Diversity in the 1990s: Implications for Services to Young Children with Special Needs, written by P. Edmunds, S. A. Martinson and P.F. Goldberg for NEC*TAS and the Pacer Center. A concise (10 pages) report on how U.S. society is changing demographically, how that affects preschool-aged children and the implications of growing poverty and increasing cultural diversity on preventing and remediating special education needs.

A Bibliography of Selected Resources on Cultural Diversity for Parents and Professionals Working With Young Children Who Have, or Are At Risk For, Disabilities, prepared at the Pacer Center for NEC*TAS. This document lists and describes a variety of organizations and written materials relevant to children of different cultures.

The Assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Different Preschoolers, by Maryann Santos de Barona and Andres Barona, in Early Childhood Research Quarterly, special issue of September, 1991 summarizes problems with traditional assessments and recommends procedures that help rectify these problems.

Refer to the Bibliography for more information on these and other recommended resources on screening and assessment.

CURRICULUM AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

There are several goals that early childhood programs in the United States generally seek to attain. Primary among these are:

- fostering positive self concept
- enhancing language development
- developing social, emotional, motor and cognitive development
- developing creative expression

Programs embracing a wider population and perspective might add:

- fostering respect for cultural, family and economic diversity and individual differences
- enhancing language development in children's native language and laying the foundation for the development of two languages

Both sets of goals can be met successfully by a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

What is a developmentally appropriate curriculum for young children?

Classroom design: Developmentally appropriate early childhood programs allow children to explore their environment and actively participate in learning activities. In many ways, the classroom environment is the curriculum. Good early childhood classrooms are designed with interest centers which contain materials that invite children's choice and stimulate interaction between children. In planning a classroom, teachers consider the quality of the environment as a "learning tool." Teachers should ask themselves: Does the arrangement of the various interest centers provide order to the materials and make them inviting? Are the materials easily accessible? Are they relevant to children's experience? The primary goal in designing the classroom should be for each child to have independence and freedom to explore and to master the environment to the best of his or her abilities and to provide ample activities and opportunities for interaction with peers and materials, cooperative learning, and communication.

An early childhood classroom evolves. As children grow and learn, the classroom must be evaluated to determine if new materials or interest areas are working effectively. A good way to assess the effectiveness of the environment is for staff to systematically observe children using the materials and interest areas.

The curriculum guides recommended in this section and in the Bibliography provide more complete discussions of materials and the environmental design for a culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate classroom. Refer to the Appendix for a summary of developmentally appropriate materials and equipment.

Curriculum design: The program should include individual, small group and large group activities, self-directed activities, and cooperative activities. Open-ended activities that can have multiple outcomes, rather than a single or preset outcome, can help children experience success and foster creativity. Learning for young children should be active and engaging. Children need opportunities to master physical and cognitive tasks, to interact socially with other children and adults and to develop creativity through art, music, movement and imagination. Young children learn about the world through interacting with people and the physical environment, through direct experience of working with and changing real objects, by manipulating symbols, using language and by "trying on" a variety of roles.

Teachers who work with young children must be observers and facilitators of children's play. Through careful observation, teachers learn when it is appropriate to offer additional materials and to interject comments that can move play to a more challenging or satisfying level. Finding ways to encourage and enrich children's play is the most important element in program planning. Much of what children learn during the preschool years, and beyond, is processed through play experiences with peers. In the early childhood program, play helps to develop social, emotional, cognitive, language and motor skills, and is necessary for the growth of self-awareness, a sense of competence and a positive self-concept. Play provides a context that is highly motivating for children and can provide a stimulating language environment. An early childhood program that encourages child-directed play and social interaction is a good environment for enriching children's native language or for children to start learning a second language in a natural way.

How do I develop a more culturally sensitive curriculum?

Research: The first step is to review published curricula that build on diversity. Some excellent resources are:

Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children, by Louise Derman-Sparks and the ABC Task Force. A National Association for the Education of Young Children publication which explains methods of developing a program that deals with racism, sexism, disabilities, cultural differences in a positive and empowering way.

ALERTA: A Multicultural, Bilingual Approach to Teaching Young Children, by Lesley Williams and Yvonne De Gaetano. A curriculum designed for bilingual Head Start programs. Two strong points are its focus on developing your curriculum around children's interests and concerns and how to manage a classroom where children range from monolingual English to monolingual Spanish (or any second language).

Teaching and Learning in a Diverse World: Multicultural Education for Young Children, Patricia G. Ramsey. Covers a wide range of subjects, including first and second language acquisition, methods of infusing activities relevant to several specific cultures into the curriculum, how to work with parents, and concepts of young children relating to culture.

Young Children in Action, by M. Hohmann, B. Banet and D.P. Weikart. The High/Schope curriculum provides a framework for teachers to use that supports developmental activities based on children's interests and cultures.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age Eight, Sue Bredekamp, Editor. A publication of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. A good guide to best practices in developmental early childhood education.

(See the Bibliography for additional information on these and other curriculum guides.)

Part of the research process will be to look at your own cultural background and your understanding of other cultures. This can be personally rewarding as you discover more about yourself and also about other cultures in order to support children from those cultures. It may also be challenging because our ideas about child rearing, how and what children should learn, and how adults should interact with children are highly influenced by our own upbringing and culture. Since underlying beliefs and impressions about people of different cultures are rarely conscious, the way that they influence behavior may be invisible. Uncovering your own hidden assumptions and beliefs is an important step to improving interactions with children and it requires reflection. The books listed above provide ideas about how to approach this task.

Infuse culture: Tailoring the classroom and curriculum to reflect the cultures of the children in the program is a creative and ongoing process and involves adults (teachers, parents) and children. The result will provide children with opportunities to learn about themselves and enjoy and respect differences among people. In addition, including the child's culture in the environment and curriculum provides continuity between a child's home and the classroom. Making such connections for children enables them to take in the new information and experiences that the program provides. The focus should be, as with any good early childhood classroom, active learning and play with materials that are relevant to the children's lives.

A focus on holidays or unique elements of different cultures can be a first step in infusing different cultures into the curriculum. It is also vital to integrate activities and materials that reflect the daily lives of children from different backgrounds or abilities, which is what makes the environment most understandable to young children. For example, introducing everyday foods from different cultures, from presenting the basic ingredients to preparation of the food to discussing how it is eaten and then eating it, gives children a chance to touch, smell, see, taste and talk about the experience. This is a meaningful activity because it is based on objects and actions that are familiar to young children (food, eating, cooking). In contrast, young children have little understanding of adult concepts such as national boundaries, customs, religions or holidays. Introducing holidays from around the world or from different religious traditions, or introducing food only associated with holidays or special celebrations may provide an interesting diversion for children, but not promote any real understanding of their significance or be incorporated into the child's concept of his or her own world. Parents can be excellent resources when you are planning activities that are appropriate to their culture.

The key factors in developing an environment and curriculum that promotes positive attitudes toward differences, whether those differences be in gender, culture, language, or ability are:

- using the children themselves as resources for activities and materials.

Developing a child-centered program requires a partnership with children and families. Teachers first collect information about the children and their cultures, and then make careful choices from commercial and community resources of materials and activities. Observation of children's interests and concerns is the foundation of an evolving curriculum.

- designing activities, interactions, and special events carefully and with the help of parents or other resources so that elements of different cultures are presented respectfully and appropriately.

It is important that your curriculum affirms and celebrates differences. Consult the curriculum guides recommended above and in the Bibliography for specific ideas about how to do this.

Assess Your Classroom or Program: In assessing a classroom or developing ideas about making changes, it is useful to pose questions to yourself and other staff about the classroom and curriculum.

Ask yourself (for teachers) ...

- Do children have the opportunity to communicate with peers and adults in their native language?
- How does the curriculum support children of various linguistic backgrounds, of different cultural backgrounds, of both genders, of different abilities, who are present in the classroom?
- How does the classroom and curriculum represent different cultural groups which are present in the school, in your community, in the United States?
- Is play the primary learning tool?
- How does the model you have (or are considering) support young children's native language development? How does it support second language acquisition?
- How are children led to understand that their own natural forms of expression can be understood and useful while also being given examples of more formal, standard language?
- Is there diversity in cooperative learning groups? If this does not happen naturally, are there ways to encourage it?

- Are activities and materials concrete, real and culturally relevant to the lives of the children in the classroom and their families?
- Do activities and materials used in the classroom supportive of differences in gender, race, disability and culture?
- Does the school staff--administrators, teachers, aides, therapists--model respect for differences?
- What ways have you found to communicate with families who speak a different language? What strategies do you have for addressing differences in cultural communicative styles between the school and families?

Ask yourself (for administrators) ...

- Does the school/program staff reflect the diversity of the children in the school and in the community?
- Have people for translation/interpretation or communication with families been located? Have staff development programs been developed?
- How are parents or primary caregivers involved in the decision-making process regarding their children's education?
- How do inservice training/professional development activities address language development, bilingualism, and nonstereotypical approaches to gender, race, culture and disabilities?
- What fiscal resources are available for materials, curriculum development/revision and cultural enrichment? What community resources might be found to help support materials and activities for programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive?
- Is there continuity in the approach to language and developmentally appropriate practices from preschool into the elementary grades?
- Are teachers enlisting the assistance of children's families in acquiring help and other resources for materials and activities that are reflective of different cultures? How their efforts being facilitated or supported?

Visit Other Programs: Visits to programs that use a bilingual, multicultural or anti-bias curriculum can be helpful in formulating your own plans. To make the best use of such visits, you should be clear about what elements you are looking for and be skilled in observation. You are unlikely to find an ideal program, so you may have to sift through what is appropriate for your program and what is not. The questions above could help focus your observations and interviews with the staff of another program.

The following are some typical questions that are asked about bilingual and culturally diverse programs:

My class is homogeneously white and middle class and it reflects the composition of my community. Should I introduce other cultures into the curriculum? How would I do this?

All children will grow up to live in a world that is diverse and one in which different peoples are becoming more interdependent every day. Children are often fascinated by other cultures as long as the way in which those cultures are introduced is understandable to them. In their early childhood years, children have not formed strong prejudices, have not developed the stereotypes that permeate popular culture, and are concerned about what is "fair" and "not-fair," so it makes sense to start early to foster respect and appreciation for many kinds of people. It is a good time to learn about differences in language, appearances, customs and abilities in positive ways.

The best way to teach positive attitudes toward diversity is by having a diverse group of children in the classroom. If your community is not culturally diverse, one way to move toward an inclusive environment is to explore the interests and backgrounds of children who are in your classroom, including children with special needs. You can use what you discover from the children themselves to build a curriculum of acceptance. It is important in this process to introduce information and activities related to the various cultures within the United States that children will eventually encounter. Highlighting differences and similarities that exist in the classroom in a positive way can be effective in starting to teach about other cultures in a classroom that does not seem to be diverse. A careful selection of books and materials of different cultures reinforces a respect for diversity. If possible, program staff should reflect diverse cultures. Community members from different linguistic and cultural groups can be invited into the classroom, and field trips can be arranged to enrich children's experience of different cultures.

What is it like for a child in a classroom where everything is in a language that is not understood?

The following account relates the experience of a Cuban immigrant who entered first grade in the United States knowing no English. There was no bilingual program available at that time.

> *Unintelligible noise is all that my cousin and I heard when we first heard English spoken to us. We clung together as we approached our school on the first day. I knew that we would be all right as long as we stayed together. It never occurred to me that we would be separated and placed in different classes. Once I got over my terror at this event, I saw the friendly face of a person who held my hand and comforted me. She was my new teacher. She smiled and stayed close to me, making me feel more secure.*
>
> *My teacher taught me English when she could fit it into the day, sometimes over lunch. She taught me words in English and asked me to teach her words in Spanish. Once she learned some words and phrases, she taught them to the rest of the class. My new friends knew colors and how to count in Spanish, as well as basic greetings. They even learned my favorite song, "Los Pollitos." I would recite what I'd learned in English and my classmates would clap for me. Sometimes we would get extra time at recess or a special activity because I had learned so many words in English and had taught my classmates and teacher so much Spanish.*
>
> *My cousin had a very different experience. His teacher did not understand him, laughed at mispronounced words and would not "listen" to him unless he spoke in complete sentences. He became angry and ashamed. He was sometimes punished for refusing to speak. Eventually he refused to cooperate on anything.*
>
> *My cousin hated school and I loved it. At the end of first grade, I was promoted to second grade, while my cousin failed his first year and had to repeat first grade with the same teacher.*

What are the reasons for supporting a child's native language?

Early childhood is a critical time for developing language, social, motor and cognitive skills. For English-speaking children, a preschool program is most effective in supporting development if activities and communication are conducted in their native language (English) or in English and another language. For children who know a different language, the program will be most effective in supporting development if activities and communication are conducted in their native language or in a bilingual program, provided that the goal of the bilingual program is to foster development of two languages.

Actively supporting a child's first language during the early childhood years is a sound educational practice. Developing a solid base of concepts in the first language facilitates transference of these concepts into a second language. Snow and Hoefnagel-Hoel (cited in Collier, 1989) found that children who were most successful in school were those who first developed literacy in their native language. Young children who received all their schooling in a second language needed one to five additional years to reach the same level of academic achievement as older children learning a second language who have had some early native language instruction.

Lack of support for the native language can be damaging if a child learns to prefer English over the parents' native language and stops communicating in the native language, particularly if the parents are not bilingual. In a study of 1100 families across the United States (Wong Fillmore, 1991), 64 percent of the parents whose children attended English immersion programs reported negative changes in family communication. Many children abandoned the native language (the only language of the parents) and communicated only in English. Since parents are the primary source of learning for the young child, the loss of communication through the loss of language can have disastrous effects on the child's development in many areas. Even if the parents are bilingual and literate and the child is bilingual upon entry into the early childhood program, careful consideration should be given to supporting the non-English language and the culture of the family. Respect for family traditions and cultural customs affects children's self-esteem, and self esteem enhances communication and learning.

The language of the early childhood program has implications for children's future learning and development. Language is a tool for thinking as well as communicating and the development of language as a medium of thought takes time. The goal is to foster language development. If this can best be accomplished through a native language program, such an approach should be taken. If a bilingual approach is taken, the development of two languages should be fostered rather than the replacement of one language by another.

What kind of program is appropriate for a child who knows a language other than English and has identified special education needs?

The classroom and curriculum for this child should address both the child's native language and the special education need. The whole child should be considered in the curriculum of the classroom, including the language of the home and the cultural background of the child. The child with a disability needs an appropriate language environment (one that builds on the language s/he knows) and also needs to be integrated with typically-developing peers. These needs can be addressed in a bilingual or native language program that integrates children with special needs or in a classroom with a bilingual aide and appropriate special education supports. If the child is of preschool age, programs outside of the public schools that are conducted in the child's native language or that are bilingual programs should be investigated as possible placements for the child. Consult the next section for a discussion of various classroom language models.

CLASSROOM LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION MODELS

What should I do if I have only one or two children who speak a language other than English in my classroom?

A person who speaks the language of the child should be found to work as an aide in the classroom on a part-time (part of the day or certain days of the week) or full-time basis. There are other resources you also may be able to draw upon: People in your program or school system who speak the language may be willing to be present in the classroom on a regular basis to translate and to assist the teacher with curriculum adaptations. Resource people could also include older children, other professional staff, custodial or support staff, and/or volunteers from the community including the children's families.

The teacher in a classroom can help the children who speak the language(s) other than English by using strategies for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). This approach involves using simple language that deals with concrete objects and immediate experiences in an environment of active learning. Speech should be slow and distinct and things in the environment should be "labeled" in oral and written language. This task is made relatively easy if the classroom environment and curriculum is developmentally appropriate for young children. All young children learn through concrete experiences and need to understand the language and the activities that are going on. Use of slow, simple language, illustrated by showing and doing is typical of an early childhood curriculum and the teaching of English as a Second Language. Young children should not be "taught" language or abstract concepts but assisted in using language through play and participation in group activities.

This approach is appropriate for children with and without special needs who speak a language other than English.

What should I do if there are several children who speak several different languages in my classroom?

In this situation, the same suggestions as for the previous question are applicable, except that the classroom would need several tutors or aides who speak the languages represented in the classroom.

What should I do if I have a whole class of children who speak the same language other than English?

Because children's development of language is the primary consideration, the first approach to consider is a program that is conducted in the children's language, with the possible exception of teaching the communication of basic needs in English. The classroom should have a teacher who is bilingual (or monolingual) in the children's language. Experience in teaching young children in a developmental curriculum is as important as being bilingual. If the class does not presently have a bilingual teacher, until a teacher is found there should be an aide present who speaks the children's language.

Another approach is to set up a two-way bilingual program. Two-way programs involve having one group of children who speak a language other than English and an English-speaking group. The language of the classroom alternates equally between Spanish, for example, and English. Some programs are conducted in Spanish one day and in English the next, and written materials are available in both languages. Program staff should be bilingual because all children need help in the second language when activities are conducted in the second language. It is also important for staff to be bilingual to affirm the value of both languages and to provide bilingual role models.

The ALERTA curriculum describes a related approach. This is a method of developing bilingualism in a mixed group of children, some who are monolingual English speakers, some who are monolingual in a language other than English, and others who are already bilingual but dominant in one or the other language.

The bilingual approaches can be successful, but require careful design and planning. All of these variations can be appropriate for integrating children with special needs.

What is a language immersion program?

This is a program where people who speak the majority language in an area or country are immersed in a second language. As much as possible, interactions and instruction are conducted in the second language by a teacher who is bilingual. This type of program has been used successfully in teaching adults a second language quickly. When this model is used to teach children in the United States, it usually means that English-speaking children are placed in a program that is conducted in a second language. In practice, the language of choice seems to be French, but it could be any second language. This type of program has been successful in various places around the world when it is used to develop bilingualism in a minority language among people who speak the majority or higher status language (Romaine, 1989).

In the United States, an immersion program can be a good way for English-speaking children to become bilingual, particularly if they can continue with the second language as they go through school and/or have some outside contact or family member who also speaks that language. The immersion program can include children who are native speakers of the second language, in which case it is sometimes called a bilingual immersion program. The inclusion of children who are native speakers of the target language (Spanish, for example) can have positive effects on both populations (English- and Spanish-speakers): For English-speaking children, the Spanish-speaking children provide good peer models; for the Spanish-speaking children, the program offers a good foundation in their own language and can be an initial phase of becoming bilingual because it offers opportunities to learn some English through informal interaction and play with native English-speaking children. This type of program at its best results in all of the children in the class becoming bilingual.

Immersion programs achieve a different result than those that place children who speak a language other than English into an English-language program, although such an approach may appear to be a mirror image of an immersion program. The effects are different because of the prevalence and status of English in the environment. Children who already speak English and whose families speak English are in virtually no danger of forgetting or losing their English language and will continue to learn more. Young children who speak a language other than English may have limited exposure to their own language (perhaps only through their parents) and therefore have limited opportunities to expand their knowledge. In the United States, they are surrounded by English, which is generally perceived to have a higher status than their own language. Many children believe that learning English is more advantageous to them and may either choose to stop speaking their native language or just lack sufficient chance to converse in their native language and do not continue their development in that language.

While true immersion programs are carefully planned to result in bilingualism, many children who speak a language other than English are simply placed in an English program and allowed to "sink or swim" without support. The purpose of this placement is for the child to learn English, not to develop bilingualism. For these reasons, placing a child who speaks a minority language in an all-English program is sometimes characterized by the word "submersion" rather than immersion.

How long will children need native language instruction?

Children need native language instruction or native-language-supported instruction until they are ready to learn directly in English. Research shows that on average it takes immigrant children five to seven years to perform as well academically (in English) as their English-only-speaking peers (Collier, 1989; Cummins, 1981). It is important that children be exposed to English, but the focus in the preschool and kindergarten years needs to be on building the foundations for literacy in the first language: speech and comprehension, vocabulary building and other pre-reading skills, and number and spatial concepts. In a transitional bilingual model, in first grade, exposure to basic skills in the first language would continue while introducing children to plenty of oral, context-rich English. By second grade, assuming the child has learned basic reading skills and the number system in the first language, the child may be ready to start reading and writing what English s/he knows. Of course, this is a general outline, real children progress at different rates. A child will need an aide or tutor who speaks his or her native language to be available as long as it takes for the child to acquire enough English to be able to learn directly in English.

What if there is no bilingual kindergarten program in my school system? What will happen if children who have attended a native language preschool go to an all-English kindergarten?

A native language program during the preschool years provides a solid foundation for learning a second language. Children who have attended a monolingual native language preschool, even if they move on to an English-language kindergarten, have a more solid language base to draw upon for transfer of their skills into a new language. This is not to imply that an English-language kindergarten is the best placement for a child who has come from a non-English preschool program. Research supports the early development of literacy in the native language (Wong Fillmore, 1989, for example).

Preschool teachers can offer support and resources to kindergarten teachers, assist them in understanding individual children, and help in developing an ESL or bilingual program.

When and how should children who speak a language other than English be integrated with native-English speakers in an early childhood program?

Children who have the opportunity to have free play or structured play with native English-speaking children will be motivated to communicate and will often pick up the necessary language to engage in play without help from an aide or teacher. This is a good way for children to get an introduction to English, pick up "survival skills" in English, to hear simple age-appropriate language and develop an ear for native pronunciation. It may also provide an opportunity for English-speaking children to begin to learn another language, particularly if this accomplishment is supported by the teacher. However, the apparent fluency in English that may develop should not be mistaken for the ability to comprehend English instruction that is more complex or abstract than the English required in a play environment.

WORKING WITH FAMILIES

Research shows that involving families in partnerships with schools and communities prepares children for school and eventual life success. Families involved in their child's education during the preschool years develop a better relationship with their children, and become more involved in their child's elementary school when they are older (Weiss, 1988).

There are many factors in the home environment that influence the behavior, the cognitive and language development of young children. There will be variations in the language use and child-rearing practices in the home based on cultural background of the parents and other caregivers. The family economic circumstances, structure (number of siblings, presence of extended family members, etc.), and the kinds of materials available for play will also influence development. Other factors in the community or home environment that may affect bilingual development are motivation to learn the second language and the match between communicative style of the home and the early childhood program. Parents' attitudes concerning the value of the first and second languages and children's feelings about the speakers of each language will influence motivation to learn and communicate in either language. A need to communicate in both the first and second language is key to motivation to learn each language.

From these factors and influences that affect children's language learning, several questions emerge which program staff might seek to answer about children in their classrooms:

- Do parents and program staff have similar expectations for the child?
- Is the community environment supportive or hostile toward the family's culture?
- What are the values of the family with respect to use of the first or the second language?
- What is the educational level of parents and other primary caregivers?
- Are the primary caregivers bilingual? What are their goals for the acquisition of English by their child?

What is the role of teachers and other program staff in working with families of children from minority cultures?

Relationships between the adults caring for children need to be developed so that learning and cooperation can be reciprocal. Getting to know the child and family of another culture is a gradual process. Knowledge of various cultural groups and their history of settlement in the United States and in the community can provide program staff with insight into the possible needs of children and families. For example, a child of parents who are recent refugees will have different needs and behaviors than a child of parents whose cultural group has been established in the community for a long time with established social networks and institutions. Acquainting the child's family with the school and its culture is also important and is a key to developing a partnership for learning. There may be differences in the expectations of the family and the school or program and so ways of communicating must be found to minimize conflicts for the child.

Program staff also have to negotiate with parents what the expectations are of parents' involvement with the program. This may take considerable effort if there is a language barrier and if there are culturally-based expectations that do not match between the school and the family.

Teachers need to find out as much as they can about the language environment of the children in their classroom. Even if a child speaks English and has English-speaking parents, it may be that a grandparent or other person who frequently cares for the child speaks another language. This knowledge may be valuable in explaining that child's language or other behavior.

What attitudes and expectations might I encounter in parents in regard to their child's language learning?

Cross-cultural research has emphasized the importance of parental expectations and teacher expectations of children and of what will go on in an early childhood program. Parents of some cultures expect play and cooperative learning, parents from other cultures expect an academic orientation. These orientations and expectations may come in conflict with what a teacher expects children to do in preschool or kindergarten.

A common desire of parents who are not native English-speakers is that their children should learn English as soon as possible in order to succeed in school. Their recognition of the importance of English to success in the United States is accurate. They may instigate the use of English in the home to help children become part of the dominant culture quickly. The parents themselves may be engaged in learning English and that should be supported. However, they should be encouraged not to switch into using English in the home simply because they think that it will be advantageous to their child. The language in which the parents are fluent will provide the richest language environment for the child, in contrast to the simple and possibly incorrect English of beginning learners. Incorrect language usage by the parent may be passed on to the child. Parents who use a new second language to communicate with their child tend to become less spontaneous and natural in their use of language -- a serious loss to the relationship and to the child's language learning. Since children are exposed to a primarily monolingual English environment outside the home (and on television), the danger is greater that children will lose or abandon their home language than that they will not learn English. Parents also may be unaware that young children may easily forget or abandon their native language. In addition, they may be unaware that maintaining their own language and heritage in the home can have positive effects on their child's language learning and future academic success.

How can I involve families who do not speak English in the educational process?

Parents from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds can be vital to developing the curriculum and environment that adapts their culture in a meaningful way. Asking for their ideas and for contributions relevant to their culture is an important part of this process. This type of engagement with parents serves both to enrich and develop the curriculum for the children in the classroom, and to include parents as partners in the education of their children.

To improve families' involvement in your program, first you will have to find ways of communicating. You will also need to explore and experiment with methods of involvement that fit the families' cultures and their individual needs. This may require formal or informal research. Meetings can be held to provide parents with pertinent information and discussions can be held to discover ways in which parents can help their children at home that is consistent with their cultural values. Bilingual parents can be recruited from the community to serve as liaisons with parents who speak a language other than English, or to make home visits.

There are numerous barriers to family involvement, a language barrier is only the most obvious one. Cultural differences may be a cause of noninvolvement -- different cultural groups have different expectations about what their role should be in the education of their children. Recent immigrants to the United States may not expect to play much of a part in the program or they may be intimidated by the educational system here. Parents from minority linguistic or cultural backgrounds may be uninvolved for the same reasons parents from the majority culture are uninvolved: both parents work; a single parent works or is overwhelmed by childrearing or financial hardship; a family crisis may be in progress; and there are not opportunities for involvement that fit in with their schedules or interests.

If parents want their child to be immersed in a monolingual English program despite concerns that I have, what should I do?

If you have discussed the benefits of maintaining their child's first language and your concerns about the potential loss of the first language or other concerns you might have about their child learning a new language at that particular time in his or her life, and the parents still believe that it is best for their child to be in an all-English-language program, your job is then to support their choice. You can use strategies for teaching English as a Second Language and infuse the culture of the child into the curriculum.

How do I deal with the gender expectations of families from different cultures? What can I do if families from my own culture have gender expectations that conflict with mine or with the goals of the program?

Expectations of what kind of activities, clothes and behaviors are appropriate for boys and for girls differ around the world, within the various cultures of the United States, and probably within your own neighborhood or family. It is integral to the anti-bias approach that teachers be flexible and nonjudgmental in dealing with different viewpoints of what are appropriate roles and behaviors for males and females. Some suggestions (Derman-Sparks et al, 1989) for working with families are:

- develop an atmosphere of safety for expressing ideas and concerns.

This will help set the stage for staff and parents to have a dialogue about child development, program goals and an exchange of ideas about the gender identity and roles. Find out what parents believe about gender roles in their own childrearing practices and about what their expectations are of their own child's behavior in the program.

- provide information to raise awareness of how young children develop gender identity and gender roles and about the needs of both boys and girls to explore their world freely and to experiment with different roles.

This can be done through individual or group meetings, and through written communications, such as newsletters.

- involve family members in developing curriculum, collecting materials, contributing written or oral stories and activities, and participating in the classroom.

These activities not only contribute meaningfully to the program, but also provide opportunities for incidental education in early childhood development and for the reasons and beliefs behind your approach to early childhood education.

Children may report sexist views of their parents, such as "My dad says boys don't play with dolls." Sometimes you may have to handle a situation like this with a statement such as, "In this classroom, all children may play with dolls." However, in the long run it will be more valuable to engage the parents in discussion of the issue and to do more general family education. You could call a meeting to discuss different viewpoints, if you feel confident of your abilities as a facilitator. You may need to find a compromise activity or position, such as having dolls become "patients" in a hospital or members of a sports team.

TO READ MORE . . .

Developing Cross-Cultural Competence: A Guide for Working with Young Children and Their Families, by Eleanor W. Lynch and Marci J. Hanson. This book examines the role that culture plays in families' and professionals' beliefs and behaviors, and provides strategies for effective cross-cultural interactions. The book also offers a summary of language and communicative styles, attitudes and values, history, religious beliefs and other information about major cultures, and variations within those cultures, in the United States: Anglo-European, Native American, African-American, Latino, Asian, Pilipino, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island and Middle Eastern.

The Anti-Bias Curriculum, ALERTA and Teaching and Learning in a Diverse World also present many good ideas about working with parents.

Refer to the Bibliography for more specific information about these books.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

What are the economic implications of providing native language instruction? Is it cost effective?

Programs that provide language support for children whose first language is other than English are cost effective over the long term, and do not have to be inherently costly. In the short run, depending on the size of the program, a specialized program providing supplementary language services may require additional funding. Some of the cost will depend on how well a program is able to integrate the specialized components into the regular curriculum.

Around the world, not only the U.S., poor outcomes (retention, dropping out of school, low literacy levels) have been documented among children from linguistic minorities who have been submersed in the majority language or who have participated in bilingual programs whose goal was the replacement of the first language rather than the development of two languages (Romaine, 1989). Studies have shown that grade retention in early years is one of the most significant factors connected to dropping out of high school and that children from linguistic and cultural minorities are overrepresented among the children who are retained or referred to special education (Shepard, 1991; Smith and Shepard, 1987; Snow and Hakuta, 1987; Nesser, 1986; Cummins, 1984). The long term benefits of high quality bilingual programs, due to a decrease in grade retention, a decrease in inappropriate referrals to special education, decreased drop out rates and improved student outcomes, are significant (Cummins, 1984; Romaine, 1989). In the long run, decreases in these areas not only cut costs in school districts but lower the financial burden on society as a whole. In overall benefits and cost effectiveness to the children, the local community and the state, it is much wiser to provide effective services early than to suffer the consequences of neglect years later.

We have bilingual specialists in my school system. Shouldn't they deal with this issue rather than the early childhood staff?

Children whose first language is not English are still children, with all the needs that every child has. One of the ideas that arises repeatedly is that education for children whose first language is other than English is somehow something other than education. Good education is good education regardless of which language is the medium for instruction, and a good education for each child is the shared responsibility of all program staff. The main guideline should be that the language of the curriculum is comprehensible to the child and that the curriculum is developmental and inclusive.

Bilingual specialists in a school system can provide help in training, identifying issues and resources to provide the optimal linguistic and cultural environment for children. Teachers with early childhood training are needed to provide a rich, diverse developmental curriculum.

Who is qualified to teach children who speak a language other than English?

Research and experience indicate that there are many factors that must be considered when teaching children who are learning a second language. The competencies needed by any teacher, whether bilingual or monolingual, go beyond the understanding of a subject area or the ability to speak one language or another. As the population of children entering early childhood programs becomes more diverse, the need for teachers to be aware of the many aspects of that diversity (language, culture, socioeconomic background, religion, gender and ability) also grows. With growing awareness comes the need to adapt teaching methods, materials, and styles to embrace this diversity.

Although the competencies listed below apply to public school certification in Massachusetts, they may be useful guidelines for the knowledge and skills needed for staff in settings with diverse languages and cultures. The competencies reflect not only what will be expected of bilingual teachers but also those that will become a part of all teachers' training. A bilingual teacher:

- demonstrates knowledge of instructional and curricular techniques and programmatic strategies and models which promote the social and cultural value of students from diverse cultural, racial and linguistic backgrounds;
- applies theories and knowledge of learning processes relating to first and second language acquisition;

- demonstrates knowledge of the history and contributions of diverse ethnic and cultural groups in the United States;
- understands his/her own ethnic, historical and cultural identity background;
- demonstrates knowledge of curriculum, teaching strategies and organizational models for providing dual language instruction;
- understands similarities and differences among dialects of the language in which the teacher has demonstrated proficiency and between that language and English;
- demonstrates knowledge of intercultural relations and communication to create a positive classroom environment for non-native speakers of English;
- demonstrates knowledge of the concept of cultural identity and its influence on affective development;
- develops and modifies curriculum, and designs and implements alternative instructional strategies appropriate for multicultural education.
- designs and uses evaluation procedures appropriate to dual language/multicultural education;
- understands the ways in which information is communicated formally and informally in diverse communities;
- understands human growth and development across cultures
- uses strategies and methods appropriate for teaching and developing literacy in the language in which the candidate has demonstrated proficiency.

In addition, teachers should have background and preparation in early childhood education and special education.

Where can I find qualified staff who are fluent speakers of a language other than English?

In a school system that has a bilingual program all regular processes for staff recruitment would be followed to find qualified early childhood staff who are fluent in another language. Additional sites for advertisements for staff, whether your program is in a public school or not, are community agencies and religious organizations that serve the language populations in question. Restaurants, grocery stores or other enterprises that are run by or cater to the population you are seeking may be helpful as "clearinghouses." Parents may be able to lead you to people in their language community who would not ordinarily be reached by ordinary recruitment procedures. There are alternative certification procedures that assist people who may have been trained as teachers in their own country and have teaching experience, but who are not certified in this country.

Another strategy that can be effective, particularly in preschool programs, is to develop parents as classroom aides. This approach often has worked well in Head Start programs. Whether this is possible depends on the background and interests of the parent and other variables, but this approach can be advantageous to the program, to the parent and to the children in the classroom.

Public schools located where there are only a few children who speak a language other than English ("low incidence language groups") may obtain referrals and resources from the Bureau of Equity and Language Services in the Massachusetts Department of Education. The Resource section lists other organizations that could be of assistance.

What if I can't find an appropriately qualified teacher or aide?

There are organizations that make referrals to qualified individuals at the state and local levels. If, after exploring available resources and alternative strategies (e.g., alternative certification, enlisting parents or community agencies), you still cannot find a fully qualified person, remember that people who possess some, but not all, of the competencies needed can acquire them through further training and education.

Team teaching with a bilingual teacher is one approach to providing training in addition to inservice training, courses and workshops. Monolingual teachers who have children entering their classrooms from bilingual programs need training so that they will be aware of issues and needs of children from diverse language and cultural backgrounds.

What are the laws and regulations regarding children whose first language is other than English in early childhood programs?

Public schools: School districts are mandated to provide kindergarten to all eligible children and mandated to provide a free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment to all children with special needs beginning at age three. Schools should be guided by Chapter 71A, Chapter 622, and Chapter 766 (all described below) in designing early childhood programs that include children whose first language is other than English. Meeting Chapter 188 Early Childhood Standards for Programs for Three- and Four-Year Olds or the Guidelines for Chapter 188 Kindergarten Programs is required for programs receiving Chapter 188 funding, and is recommended for other early childhood programs in the public schools, including those that enroll children whose first language is other than English.

Massachusetts General Law, **Chapter 71A**, Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), is the state mandate to provide bilingual education programs for limited English proficient students when there are 20 or more students of a given language group in school district. Provision of a kindergarten program (and by extension, a preschool program) as part of a Transitional Bilingual Education program is not mandatory, although it is strongly encouraged by Chapter 71A regulations. Where TBE programs are offered, it makes good educational sense to make the early childhood programs an integral part of the whole program and consistent with the practices required by Chapter 71A.

There are a number of elements which are shared by all bilingual programs mandated under Chapter 71A. Those most relevant to early childhood programs are:

- use of native language as a medium of instruction. Chapter 71A requires native language instruction almost exclusively in the initial years when a child enters school. This requirement reflects the reality that a child must be given a chance to acquire a first language before having to learn a second language.

- integration with English-speaking peers. Education for children whose first language is not English is not intended to segregate children from their English-speaking peers. Chapter 71A calls for children to be integrated into standard curriculum activities which are not heavily language dependent.

Another Massachusetts law which mandates supplementary services to limited English proficient students is Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 5, "**Chapter 622**", which prohibits discrimination in public schools. The Chapter 622 regulations (603 CMR 26.03 (4) state:

> Each student, regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, religion or limited English-speaking ability, shall have equal rights of access to courses of study and other opportunities available through the school system of the city or town in which he or she resides, along with appropriate bilingual instruction and programs or other curriculum offerings of a supportive nature such as appropriate remedial programs.

If a child does not understand English, that child cannot benefit from a curriculum presented in English. School districts must provide supplementary services for all students of limited English proficiency regardless of the number of such students in the district, so this law applies even where Chapter 71A does not.

Chapter 766 regulations set out procedures for screening, assessment and delivery of special education services. Children eligible for these services are entitled to them regardless of their native language. There are numerous specific regulations which address families and children whose first language is other than English. Refer to the Chapter 766 regulations and the Eligibility Guidelines for Special Education, which will take effect September, 1992, for further guidance.

Head Start Programs: Federal **Head Start** regulations that apply to children from cultural or linguistic minorities are as follows:

- The curriculum has to be reflective of and relevant to the needs of the populations being served in the program, including bilingual, bicultural, multicultural, rural, urban, migrant.
- The staff needs to reflect the racial and ethnic population in the program -- if more than 50% of the children are of the linguistic minority, then there must be on staff a teacher or aide who speaks that language; if less than 50% of the children in the program speak a minority language, there must be an adult available (social worker or parent, for example) who speaks that language; and

parents must be included in curriculum development and should serve as resources in designing bilingual/bicultural activities.

The Head Start Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families developed the following **Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs** (1991). These principles are intended to provide a framework for program development and operation although they do not have the force of regulation.

- Every individual is rooted in culture.
- The cultural groups represented in the communities and families of each Head Start program are the primary sources for culturally relevant programming
- Culturally relevant and diverse programming requires learning accurate information about the culture of different groups and discarding stereotypes.
- Addressing cultural relevance in making curriculum choices is a necessary, developmentally appropriate practice.
- Every individual has the right to maintain his or her own identity while acquiring the skills required to function in our diverse society.
- Effective programs for children with limited English speaking ability require continued development of the primary language while the acquisition of English is facilitated.
- Culturally relevant programming requires staff who reflect the community and families served.
- Multicultural programming for children enables children to develop an awareness of, respect for, and an appreciation of individual cultural differences. It is beneficial to all children.
- Culturally relevant and diverse programming examines and challenges institutional and personal biases.
- Culturally relevant and diverse programming and practices are incorporated in all components and services.

TO READ MORE . . .

Preparing Personnel for Pluralism, by Ken Brockenbrough, provides information on national initiatives which focus on personnel needs for programs serving traditionally underrepresented families. Also included are projects which address cultural competence, contact people and selected resources.

CONCLUSION: CLEARING UP SOME MYTHS

Creating a nurturing environment for a diverse group of children is a challenging and exciting process. The information and issues presented so far may provide a foundation for further investigation and for the development of early childhood programs that support children's language development and respect their diverse cultures.

To conclude, there are a few remaining questions which express some common myths and misconceptions about language and culture.

Don't children have to learn English to get along in America and to succeed in school?

Yes, however, learning English is not the only or even the primary need of young children whose first language is other than English. Children of preschool and kindergarten age are still in the process of acquiring language, the foundation for development in many domains. Difficulties for children can be created when the focus of a preschool or kindergarten program is on learning English rather than fostering children's whole development or when children in a native language or bilingual classroom are not included as welcome participants in the life of the school or program.

The process of learning any language well at any age is a relatively long one -- generally speaking, about five years. Children will learn at different rates depending on their facility with languages and the language environment at home, in school and in the community, but attempting to speed up the process will not be in children's best interest over the long term. Given support for bilingual language development and an atmosphere of respect for diversity, children who start out in school speaking a language other than English should have the same prospects for succeeding in school as monolingual English-speaking children. The legal purpose of bilingual education is to insure educational equity while children are acquiring the English they need to succeed in an all-English classroom. This equity depends on providing children with experiences in a language they understand.

Don't some cultural groups do "better" than others in school?

Some researchers theorize that the people of a culture share a common idea of how to attain "success" in their own culture and that some cultural groups place a high value on formal education as a means to success. If the value placed on formal education in a culture is positive, this factor may have a beneficial influence on a child of that culture in an American school. In addition to cultural values, the more an individual family values education, the more likely the child is to be supported in academic efforts. Cultural and family support of education will tend to work in favor of children from these backgrounds as they go through school. However, educational outcomes are based on a number of factors, including the individual abilities of the child, teacher expectations, socioeconomic circumstances, and school conditions. The more conducive these factors are to learning, the more likely a child is to do well in school.

Because so many factors can influence learning, it is dangerous to base expectations about an individual child's abilities or chances of success on the educational track record of the cultural group to which s/he belongs. When a child comes into a classroom and is faced with a teacher who expects less or more because that child belongs to a particular cultural, linguistic or socioeconomic group, it is more difficult for that child to develop individual strengths and personality.

Didn't past generations learn English without native language support?

Yes, but just because people "made it" in the past without support does not mean that we should repeat the patterns of the past. Educating children within the context of respect for their culture and language has not been the predominant trend in the United States, although in some times and places in our history, native language or bilingual education has been accepted as relatively noncontroversial. In other cases, such as in the education of children from many Native American tribes, children were punished for speaking their native language as part of a concerted effort to extinguish these languages and cultures. Although these children learned English without support of their native language, this policy resulted not only in the loss of culture and communication for the individuals and communities involved, but also resulted in a loss to all people through the eradication of a non-renewable resource -- entire languages that are part of our human heritage.

Millions of immigrants have entered this country over the last four centuries. In the process of learning English quickly to survive and to enhance their children's chances of success, many immigrants did not pass on their native language to their children. Consequently, those families lost an invaluable mode of communication and other pieces of their heritage, intangible losses that cannot be measured and weighed against what was gained. These losses, along with the loss of the opportunity to become bilingual, are regretted by many immigrants' children and grandchildren.

The situation for children in the United States of today is much different than for people who immigrated even at the turn of this century. A report from the California Department of Education (undated) explains this difference:

> *The bulk of immigrants arrived in America in the period 1880 to 1920. A friendly economy (an inexhaustible supply of agricultural and blue collar industrial jobs) and hard work played more of a role in their success than formal schooling.*
>
> *It was not uncommon for immigrants to be able to advance in their place of employment with only minimal levels of English fluency and education. In fact, it was not until the 1950s that Americans, both native born and immigrants alike, began to graduate from high school in large numbers. In the years of heavy immigration, fewer than 15% of all Americans completed high school.*

The job market has changed considerably since the early years of this century. Now higher levels of education have become critical to a person's economic success. In earlier times, there were more varied opportunities for success that did not depend on a high level of academic skill or preparation. Even though the high school drop-out rate is much lower today than it was in the past, it is still a national problem if students do not acquire the education necessary to enter and sustain themselves in the job market. The role of educational programs in providing equitable educational opportunities and access to the curriculum, such as through a bilingual program or specialized support services, has become essential, not only to children individually, but to the country as a whole.

TO READ MORE . . .

Bilingual Education: History, Politics, Theory and Practice, by James Crawford. This book provides a clear, non-technical overview of the issues and history that affect the field of education of children whose first language is not English. The book presupposes no special background and is accessible to the general reader.

PART III: RESOURCES

This eclectic list of resources is not exhaustive. Inclusion does not imply endorsement by the Department of Education.

Asia
Greenhouse Corp., 10937 Klingerman St., S. El Monte, CA 91733
818-575-1000

The catalogue features fiction and non-fiction books for all ages and levels in a variety of Asian languages. Children's picture books are available in Chinese, Japanese, Khmer, Laotian, Hmong, Vietnamese, Korean, Farsi, Hindi and Turkish.

Attanasio & Associates, Inc.
62-06 77 Place, Middle Village, NY 11379
718-565-0343

This publisher markets a variety of folktales and contemporary stories from various cultures, many of which are bilingual in English and the source language from Children's Book Press. The selections are from among books, authors and illustrators that have won various awards. Cultures included are Chinese, Estonian, Central American, Japanese, Mexican-American, Native American, Hmong/Laotian, African-American/Caribbean, Korean, Puerto Rican, Vietnamese. There is also a selection of the books are also available on audiocassette, read in English and in Spanish.

Boston Children's Museum
Multicultural Education Project
Linda Warner, Director
300 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210
617-426-6500 ext. 215

The Boston Children's Museum offers a variety of multicultural resources. Resources for teachers include summer institutes with follow-up school visits (focusing on Asian, African American and Latino cultures), curriculum materials, kits, a series of books called the Multicultural Celebration Series, a Resource Center and Saturday Seminars. The Modern Curriculum Press (see listing below) publishes materials, games, books, crafts, audiocassettes and posters that can be purchased in the museum gift shop, viewed in the Resource Center, or ordered directly from the company. Multimedia curriculum kits cover different cultures, including many Native American cultures. Exhibits in the museum include Native American tribes, Japan and China. Another exhibit, called Kids Bridge, helps children understand themselves, to appreciate diversity and different heritages, and to work against racism and discrimination. Although most materials are focused on kindergarten to eighth grade, there are some materials, as well as the exhibits, that are appropriate to preschool age children.

C.F.U.N. (Children For Uniting Nations, Inc.)
Ingrid Hoogendoorn
41 Foster St., Arlington, MA 02174
617-641-2386

C.F.U.N. is an educational program providing teachers with multicultural curriculum boxes filled with information, cultural items, and developmentally appropriate activities for children from age three and up, which are available for teachers in public and private programs. Training is required for use of the boxes and focuses on developing cross-cultural skills and anti-bias curriculum through discussions, role-playing and demonstrations of the use of multicultural materials in the classroom. The organization also provides an opportunity for teachers to work together to create boxes and share information with other teachers about infusing different cultures into the curriculum.

Children's Defense Fund (CDF)
122 C Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20001
202-628-8787

CDF is a nonprofit research and advocacy organization that exists to provide a voice for children. They focus particularly on poor, minority and disabled children. Their goal is to educate the public about the needs of children and to advocate for preventive measures to better the lives of children. The organization publishes a variety of advocacy guides, posters, pamphlets, factual reports and an annual report called The State of America's Children.

CHIME/NCAS
100 Boylston St., Suite 737, Boston, MA 02116
800-441-7192 or 617-357-8507

CHIME, the Clearinghouse for Immigrant Education, a project or the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS), provides resources to schools, parents and advocates and other who need information about working with immigrant children and families. Resources include books, research articles, information about successful programs and networking assistance to connect you with others working on similar issues. There is a nominal fee for documents. Complimentary copies of New Voices, the newsletter of the National Center for Immigrant Students, National Coalition of Advocates for Students, are also available.

Claudia's Caravan
P.O. Box 1582, Alameda, CA 94501
415-521-7871

Claudia's Caravan specializes in multilingual, multicultural materials for early childhood programs. Books, games, records, tapes, and ethnic dolls are available through their catalog. Materials are available in many languages, including Spanish, Cambodian, Lao, Vietnamese, Farsi, Cantonese, Korean and others.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)/Division of Early Childhood (DEC)
1920 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091
800-845-6CEC

The CEC is a national organization is a national association of professionals and parents concerned with issues related to special needs. They have established a new Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners and a Ethnic and Multicultural Concerns Network to address diversity and multicultural issues among the various divisions of CEC. The DEC has established a Committee for Minority Concerns. The organization holds annual conferences, publishes periodicals and has networks and special interest groups, as described above.

Educational Equity Concepts
114 East 32nd. St., New York, NY 10016
212-725-1803

Educational Equity Concepts is a national, non-profit organization founded to foster the development of children and adults through the creation of education programs and materials that are free of sex, race and disability bias. Curriculum guides and materials which focus on equity issues are available through the organization. In the early childhood area, they have focused particularly on integration of children with disabilities and developing science curricula that will engage the interest of girls and children from some cultural groups which have historically been underrepresented in the field of science.

The Evaluation Assistance Center-East (EAC)
Dr. Charlene Rivera, Director
Center for the Study of Education and National Development
George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052
202-994-7117 or 800-925-EACE

The EAC East is one of two regional centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education through ESEA Title VII, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA). The Center provides technical assistance to state and local education agencies on the assessment of students whose first language is other than English and evaluation of instructional programs serving these students. Technical assistance at no cost to clients is provided in needs analysis, student assessment, and program evaluation.

Federation for Children with Special Needs
Dee Spinkston, Urban Technical Assistance Specialist
95 Berkeley St., Suite 104, Boston, MA 02116
617-331-0688

The Federation is an organization which provides parents with information, training, and technical assistance in order to foster collaborative partnerships between parents and professionals who work with their children with special needs. Special efforts are made to empower parents from traditionally underserved groups, such as American Indian, African-American, Hispanic, Asian, parents with low reading skills, economically disadvantaged, rural and homeless.

Head Start Resource Center
Ingrid Chalufour
Education Development Center, 55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02160
(617) 969-7100, ext. 319

The Head Start Resource Center houses resources and provides technical assistance and training on components of Head Start programs, such as parents involvement, cultural diversity, curriculum, etc. It is one of twelve centers across the country which organizes and maintains a resource pool of trainers, and provides assistance to local Head Start programs in a variety of ways. The Resource Center is closely associated with the New England Resource Access Project (see below), which provides similar services relating to children with special needs.

ICID
Fort Point Place, 27-43 Wormwood St., Boston, MA 02210-1606
800-462-5015 (also VOICE and TDD)

The Information Center for Individuals with Disabilities (ICID) is a clearinghouse for information to individuals and professionals across the Commonwealth on a wide range of services available to people with disabilities and their families. Information includes what organizations and services are available in languages other than English, sign language. Staff provide comprehensive information, referral and problem-solving assistance on disability-related issues. ICID information specialists have access to New England INDEX's Multilingual/Multicultural Resource Directory.

Lakeshore Learning Materials
2695 E. Dominguez St., P.O. Box 6261, Carson, CA 90749
800-421-5354

Lakeshore Learning Materials offer an excellent variety of ethnic dolls for $29.95 each. Also available are Children of the World Poster Pack and Children of the U.S. Poster Pack, which represents different cultural groups within this country. Their skin-colored tempera paints (12 colors) and crayons (24 colors) called People Colors range in color and tone from ivory through mahogany to ebony. In addition they have sets of food, cooking utensils, and musical instruments from around the world, and a multicultural cookbook.

Lego Dacta
555 Taylor Rd., Enfield, CT 06082
800-527-8339

Lego Dacta is the educational division of Lego Systems and provides high quality manipulatives and curriculum support that follow the NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate materials. The Duplo system for younger children contains a set of family and occupational figures that represent a variety of ethnic groups, such as Asian, African-American, Hispanic and Caucasian. Also available are materials for designing different types of housing that children from different cultures or settings might inhabit. Many of the materials available from Lego Dacta are not available to the general public.

Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education (MABE)
% Arlene Dannenberg (for membership information)
Salem Public Schools, 29 Highland Ave., Salem, MA 01970

MABE is a non-profit, professional and advocacy association which addresses the education of children whose first language is other than English. It is the state affiliate of the National Association for Bilingual Education. The mission of MABE (and NABE) is to ensure equal opportunities for language minority students, to involve parents in schooling and policy decisions, to identify exemplary bilingual programs, to promote and publish research in language and multicultural education, to increase public understanding of the importance of language and culture in education, and to foster national language policies which meet the needs of a pluralistic society. Membership in MABE provides a quarterly newsletter, representation in state policy making, and a discount on registration at their annual conference, which provides workshops and intensive training in the latest techniques and research relating to bilingual education.

Massachusetts Department of Education
1385 Hancock St., Quincy, MA 02169

Bureau of Early Childhood Programs, 617-770-7551
Elisabeth Schaefer, Director

The Bureau of Early Childhood Programs administers federal and state early childhood funds for public schools. Its mission focuses on three objectives: program quality, parent involvement and interagency collaboration, for young children age three to age eight. The Bureau is committed to the development of high quality early childhood programs which are linked to the public educational system in Massachusetts. The role of staff is to support and assist communities in strengthening and expanding the availability of high quality early childhood programs and services for young children and their families. Quality program are those that include a rich mixture of children representative of their community, including children with and without special needs and from diverse cultural, economic and linguistic backgrounds. Information on training, technical assistance and resources may be obtained from the Bureau's early childhood specialists.

Most publications listed in the Bibliography are available for borrowing from the Bureau as are documents published or disseminated by the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NEC*TAS, federally-funded to provide technical assistance to state agencies implementing P.L. 99-457).

Bureau of Equity and Language Services (BELS), 617-770-7545
Gilman Hebert, Director

The Bureau's mission focuses on assuring that diverse learners in the public schools gain access to equal and quality education through direct and indirect services to communities by supporting and assisting students, parents, teachers and administrators. The Bureau fosters educational practices which build on learners' strengths, which value and respect diversity, and which lay a foundation for self-esteem and academic abilities. The Bureau provides technical assistance and training activities which have as their focus the respect, celebration, and integration of diversity into school districts' educational programs. The Bureau monitors compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Office of Educational Equity, 617-770-7553
Doreen Wilkinson, Acting Director

The Office of Educational Equity is responsible for the coordination of the Department's efforts to increase the educational effectiveness of public schools enrolling low-income and minority students and to respond to the needs of students from linguistic minorities, including immigrants and refugees. The Office administers the school desegregation program, the magnet school/choice program, and maintains a number of publications and resources on integrated and two-way bilingual education.

Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council
600 Washington St., Room 670, Boston, MA 02111
617-727-6374

The Council publishes a Resource List of Language Interpreters in Massachusetts, which is updated regularly and includes a listing of language interpreters pools and free-lance interpreters around the state.

Modern Curriculum Press
13900 Prospect Rd., Cleveland, OH 44136
800-321-3106

Modern Curriculum Press publishes a variety of multicultural materials, books, games, crafts, posters and audiocassettes. These materials are available for review at the Boston Children's Museum Resource Center or for purchase through the company or in the Museum gift shop (see listing above for Boston Children's Museum).

National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)
Union Center Plaza, 810 First St., NE, 3rd. Floor, Washington, DC 20002-4205
202 898-1829

NABE is a national professional and advocacy organization founded to address the educational needs of Americans from language minorities. Memberships includes parents, educators, university faculty, administrators and researchers. NABE publishes NABE News eight times per year and NABE Journal, a scholarly publication, four times per year; sponsors an annual conference; networks with state affiliates (see MABE above); and sponsors special interest groups, such as Asian and Pacific Islanders, Early Childhood Education, ESL in Bilingual Education, Language and Culture Retention, Special Education, and others.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
1834 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009-5786
202-232-8777. For information about your local affiliate group, call 800-424-2460

NAEYC is the nation's largest membership organization of early childhood professionals and others interested in improving the quality of education and care for young children and their families. The organization offers a wide range of services and resources to assist early childhood professionals, parents, and policy makers to learn more about child development, early education and care, and professional development. The organization's catalogue lists a variety of publications and materials, including the Anti-Bias Curriculum and Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Children from Birth to Age Eight.

National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE)
1118 22nd Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037
(800) 321-NCBE, (202) 467-0867

The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) and is operated by the George Washington University's Center for the Study of Education and National Development, jointly with the Center for Applied Linguistics. NCBE publishes the FORUM newsletter, the Program Information Guides series, and FOCUS occasional papers, as well as bibliographies and reprints of research articles.

The New England Center for Equity Assistance (NECEA)
300 Brickstone Square, Suite 900, Andover, MA 01810
(508) 470-0098

The U.S. Department of Education's Desegregation of Public Education Program was authorized by Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. NECEA is one of ten regional desegregation assistance centers that provide assistance to school districts in addressing desegregation problems based on race, gender, or national origin. NECEA provides technical assistance, training, and information to school districts.

New England INDEX -- Multilingual/Multicultural Resource Directory
Angie Aguirre, Coordinator
Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center, 200 Trapelo Rd., Waltham, MA
800-642-0249

New England INDEX is a private non-profit organization that provides information, and referral through a computerized database. Their information system includes the Multilingual/Multicultural Resource Directory, a listing of people and services for people of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Agencies and individuals may call INDEX for a listing of people who can assist them in working with children and parents whose first language is not English. The database includes people who speak over 30 different languages and provide educational services, such as: translation, interpretation, permanent and substitute teaching, evaluation and testing, IEP consultation, staff development, parent outreach, transcription to tapes and Braille and sign language teaching.

The New England Multifunctional Resource Center
for Language and Culture in Education (MRC)
University of Massachusetts, 250 Stuart St., Room 1105, Boston, MA 02116
6170-287-7335 or 617-426-7854

The MRC, one of 16 multifunctional support centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Affairs is a consortium of Brown University, the University of Connecticut, the University of Maine, and the University of Massachusetts. The MRC provides staff development and technical assistance to educators of students whose first language is other than English and members of language minority communities throughout the six New England states.

The New England Resource Access Project (RAP)
Educational Development Center, 55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02160
(617) 969-7100, ext. 313

The RAP provides training and technical assistance to Head Start Programs on-site and over the telephone. It is part of a national network of similar projects which support the integration of children with special needs into Head Start Programs. The RAP also sponsors workshops and a yearly conference on issues related to children with special needs in Head Start. Although more general requests related to cultural diversity should be directed to the Head Start Resource Center (listed above), questions about screening and assessment of non-English speaking children, or other special education questions regarding children from linguistic minorities should be directed to the RAP.

The Pacer Center (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights)
4826 Chicago Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55417-1055
(612) 827-2966

The Pacer Center is a training and information center for children with disabilities, funded through the U.S. Department of Education to serve the Midwestern states. Although their workshops, referrals, technical assistance services are not available to Massachusetts, their publications are available, and include: Demographics and Cultural Diversity in the 1990's: Implications for Young Children with Special Needs, A Bibliography of Selected Resources on Cultural Diversity for Parents and Professionals Working with Young Children Who Have, or Are At Risk for, Disabilities, which contains an annotated list of printed materials and organizations across the nation, and Cultural Competence in Screening and Assessment: Implications for Services to Young Children with Special Needs Ages Birth Through Five. These publications were prepared in conjunction with NEC*TAS. A limited number of these publications are available through the Bureau of Early Childhood Programs, or may be ordered directly from the Pacer Center.

Primary Source
P.O. Box 1711, Cambridge, MA 02238
617-661-8832, 617-547-1357

Primary Source is a nonprofit center for multicultural social studies resources. Their consultants provide staff development through workshops and summer institutes, and disseminate curriculum materials for K-12 classrooms.

The Red Sea Press, Inc.
15 Industry Court, Trenton, NJ 08638
609-771-1666

The Red Sea Press has assembled a collection of African-American children's books from a variety of publishers, large and small. The age range and subject matter covered is comprehensive. Books are listed by publisher in their brochure.

Savannah Books
858 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139
617-686-3423

Savannah Books stocks books for children from preschool age through high school, focusing on books by and about African Americans and other peoples of color.

UNICEF Committee of Greater Boston
99 Bishop Allen St., Cambridge, MA 02139
617-492-4554

This organization has a Speaker's Bureau, providing people who will go into schools to make presentations to children or to adults about what UNICEF does around the world to help children. They disseminate a yearly report, "The State of the World's Children," and also have a reference library which contains publications about different countries around the world, UNICEF projects, and summary papers on various issues related to those projects. The reference library is open to the public.

Urban Teacher Center
79 Wannalancit St., Lowell, MA 01854
508-975-2774

The Urban Teachers' Center, funded through Title VII, provides a variety of training activities for teachers of children from linguistic minorities. Although currently funded only to work in Lowell and Lynn Public Schools, the Center has a resource library which can be visited by others. Teachers interested in native and second language literacy development (particularly Whole Language and the writing process) will find a good collection of multicultural literature for children from preschool through grade 8.

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APPENDIX

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE MATERIALS, SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

Every early childhood clasroom should provide a wealth of materials and activities that will enhance children's awareness of diversity. Most major school supply catalogues offer a some multicultural resources. Refer to the Resource section for acquiring catalogues or products, such as curriculum guides, children's books, brochures, posters, paints and crayons in various skin colors and dolls, from some lesser known and/or local suppliers.

Sufficient quantity and variety of developmentally appropriate play materials, equipment and furnishings are necessary for the number of children enrolled in a class. A selection from each category listed below is recommended (adapted from Chapter 188 Standards for Early Childhood Programs).

Art materials: paint, paper, easels; crayons in a variety of skin colors, markers, chalk, pencils; scissors; paste; clay, playdough and modelling tools; collage materials; stickers and stamps

Blocks: large blocks, unit blocks; boats, cars, planes, trains and trucks; rubber or wood figures of people of representing various racial and cultural backgrounds; animals

Books and posters: a variety of picture and storybooks of various types (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, prose) on subjects of interest and relevance to children's lives. Books and pictures should represent diverse cultures and abilities. Books and other visual materials should be available in the language(s) of the children in the classroom.

Dramatic play materials: dolls of various cultures/races and of both genders with clothes, beds, and other doll paraphernalia; telephone; toy kitchen appliances, equipment and utensils from different cultures; cleaning equipment; dress-up clothes for both genders and from various cultures, also various professions; full-length mirror at child's level; puppets; materials for costumes; plastic food and empty cardboard food boxes

Large motor equipment: boxes and boards, sawhorses and barrels; climbers and ladders; workbench and tools; sandbox, shovels, spoons, sifters, funnels and pails; water table with bottles, tubes, siphons, funnels, sponges; riding toys; swings and slides: balls, frisbees; jump ropes; rocking boat

Manipulative materials: pegs and pegboards; beads, lacing strings, snaps and buttons; board games; puzzles; building toys (tinker toys, Legos, lincoln logs, etc.); typewriter; counting and sorting pieces; attribute blocks, cuisinaire rods, dominoes

Musical instruments: autoharp, guitar, recorder; records and record player; tapes and tape recorder; musical instruments from different cultures: drums, cymbals, bells, rhythm sticks, triangles, shakers, tambourines, xylophone; dance accessories (scarves, etc.)

Science materials: aquarium with fish or turtle; terrarium with reptiles; pets or small animals (check allergies first); non-poisonous seeds and plants; gardening tools and dirt; dry batteries, magnets, compass, thermometer; rope and pulleys; magnifying glass, kaleidoscope, prisms; balance scale and weights; measuring tape and rulers

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